



Best Practices 2000

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY EDITION

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<http://www.hud.gov/bestpractices.html>

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Building a Better Tomorrow 2000

Over the past two years, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has undergone a marked transformation in the way it conducts business — it is no longer business as usual at HUD. This change required a fundamental paradigm shift, which was dramatic for many. We dared to step forward and make a personal commitment to restoring the public trust by demonstrating competence in the way we deliver services. We recognized that our responsibility is to help people empower themselves.

Our successes have been many. We have forged partnerships with local governments, communities and the private sector — something never before heard of in government affairs. We have lifted communities to a higher level through grassroots actions by empowering communities and individuals. And, through the restructuring of field organizations to include community empowerment teams, we are setting a foundation to develop and perpetuate a unified, one-HUD approach to meeting community needs. All this in only the second year of

HUD 2020 Management Reform. Just imagine what the next 20 years will bring, if we can achieve so much in only two years.

Even though our traditional goals remain the same — fighting for fair housing, increasing affordable housing and homeownership, reducing homelessness, promoting jobs



Charlie King
Secretary's
Representative
New York/New Jersey

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Effective Techniques of Top Performers!

A Collaboration to Help Asians Fight against Housing Discrimination

Discrimination in housing is sadly a reality that many have to deal with despite the passage of national fair housing laws. It is especially difficult for recent immigrants to the United States to find adequate housing. The Asian population in New York City has faced undue hardships in finding housing. Because of cultural and language barriers, many Asians are not aware of their rights and often do not know where to turn for help.

The Asian Americans for Equality, the Human Rights Commission of the City of New York and newspaper reporters in Asian communities

are collaborating to help Asians secure adequate housing in the city's five boroughs. Referred to as Asian Americans for Equality, this HUD Best Practice is the city's only group that specifically targets the Asian community to ensure equal service in housing. Group members, speaking the native Asian languages, assist and empower members of the Asian community through the delivery of fair housing information. They inform Asians regarding their rights under the fair housing laws and help members of the Asian community file complaints when they experience housing discrimination. Additionally, Asian Americans for Equality teaches the City's Asian

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Helping the Homeless Hold Their Heads High

Homelessness continues to be a major problem in the United States, and the cycle of homelessness leaves its victims lonely, depressed and helpless. The HUD-funded Ready, Willing and Able initiative is a paid work-training program for homeless single adults in New York, New Jersey and Washington, D.C. The program is designed to help homeless men and women become productive members of society by providing them with the tools they need to succeed. Through extensive training and counseling, participants are empowered to achieve self-sufficiency.

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The program, developed by George McDonald, founder and President and Harriet McDonald, Vice President is extremely successful. In fact, Ready, Willing and Able has been instrumental in the transfer of 750 homeless men and women from the streets to self-supported housing. The program is unique in that it revolves around employment. Participants work 35 hours per week cleaning and providing maintenance services in the community. They earn minimum wage, and their earnings are used primarily to pay for room and board at a transitional housing facility. Additionally, participants must save at least \$30 per week, an amount that is matched by the program. After a 9- to 18-month period, participants

graduate to permanent, self-supported housing and full-time jobs that pay an average of \$9 per hour.

Ready, Willing and Able also has a life-skills component in which participants receive educational, substance abuse and pre-employment services. Training and counseling sessions are held during evenings and weekends so participants can take part effectively while holding full-time jobs. The life-skills classes include such subjects as culinary arts, construction and job skills.

In addition to providing job skills, the program boasts a 60 percent success rate for drug rehabilitation and 85 percent on five-year follow-ups to determine continued sobriety and employment.

Ready, Willing, and Able also has garnered impressive media coverage. The program was featured on the CBS series *60 Minutes*, covering high-profile activities to reduce homelessness in New York City's upper west and east sides.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the program is its ability to change the lives of so many people. As a testament to the program's success, 80 percent of the current staff of Ready, Willing, and Able are program graduates. These individuals broke the shackles of homelessness and joblessness to become vital members of the communities in which they live. And what's more, they are giving back to the program that first gave them the tools to succeed. ♦

2000 Best Practices Nomination Process

Submitting a Best Practice has never been easier. Now HUD staff, partners and other outside organizations can submit Best Practices nominations using HUD's internet site. The 2000 Best Practices nominations process opened on March 20, 2000 and runs through May 31, 2000. You may access the automated nomination system at <http://www.hud.gov/bestpractices/bpnom.html>.

REVAMPED NOMINATION PROCESS

HUD has improved the process for nominating Best Practices by allowing electronic submissions. Paper nominations will also be accepted. The new and improved Best Practices database collects more information, tracks the nominations throughout the review process and provides valuable information on Best Practices across the country.

BEST PRACTICES

A Best Practice must be replicable in other areas of the country, region, or local jurisdiction and generate a significant and demonstrable positive impact on those being served or managed. The nomination must also demonstrate at least one of the following characteristics:

- Effective use of partnerships among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses;
- Creative problem solving;
- Overcoming serious obstacles to program implementation; or,
- Demonstrating efficiencies achieved (i.e., saving time and resources).

Special consideration will be given to those projects or programs that either:

- Address two or more of HUD's six Strategic Goals within the same project or effort. HUD's six Strategic Goals are:

- Fighting for fair housing
- Increasing affordable housing and homeownership
- Reducing homelessness
- Promoting jobs and economic opportunity
- Empowering people and communities
- Restoring public trust
- Use newly developed concepts, technology and/or resources to significantly improve the delivery of housing and community development services, or
- Demonstrate the effective use of multiple HUD programs and resources, as well as private resources, to significantly improve the quality of life throughout the community.

2000 Focus

The 2000 Best Practices program is a showcase to demonstrate how HUD programs work and provide technical assistance to those in need.

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and economic opportunity, empowering people and communities and restoring the public trust — the primary emphasis has shifted away from HUD central, focusing instead on those working in the communities.

EMPOWERMENT

No longer are directives issued to communities, but rather a bottom-up, community-driven management style has been implemented to empower communities and individuals. By providing tools to implement revitalization strategies through various methodologies, we have empowered groups to find the best solutions for their needs — after all, no two communities are alike and no one solution will work for all. It is the partnership efforts of communities,

private sector and governments working together that builds strength and helps communities to move forward.

RESTORING PUBLIC TRUST

By consolidating and reorganizing programs, HUD has been able to more efficiently meet the needs of its constituents. In communities across the country, funds have been used to effectively empower individuals — and thus these efforts have begun to restore the public trust.

Community partnerships are an investment in the future that will build a better tomorrow for everyone.

BEST PRACTICES

Through the “Best Practices” initiative, we showcase the practices

that are models of success in empowerment and building trust, as well as in the other areas important to HUD. Because of the success of the Best Practices initiative, HUD can now document true successes in the industry that can be used as prototypes for others.

Best practices is an ideal information tool for distributing ideas that work to others across the country.

But, it doesn’t end with those practices that have been started and emulated thus far. Your successes will continue to be showcased and replicated through the Best Practices 2000 initiative. By sharing your successes with others, your legacy lives on and everyone benefits from your best practices. ♦

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HUD staff are being asked to identify nearly 1,500 Best Practices as a result of their monitoring and compliance efforts. The remainder will be nominated based on staff knowledge of Best Practices that should be recognized and replicated across the country. Outside partners, industry groups and individuals also may nominate programs/projects for replication. This will give the Department a wealth of programs and projects that can show how communities across the nation can improve their overall performance and results.

Given this ambitious effort, you should begin submitting your Best Practice nominations for consideration now. Go to HUD’s web site and start sending us your nominations for review. ♦

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community how to determine when it is necessary to seek legal guidance.

The largest challenge in implementing the program has been fear within the community. Due largely to cultural differences, the Asian population is hesitant about filing discrimination complaints. Therefore, Asian Americans for Equality plays the role of a counselor, assuring the group’s clients that discrimination in housing is illegal in the United States. Often, emotional support must accompany the information and guidance they provide.

Currently, Asians are charged higher prices for housing statewide than other ethnic groups. Asian frequently have to pay cash for apartments that are leased to others on more amenable terms, and repair

services are sometimes difficult to obtain. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Asian Americans for Equality, a greater number of people in the Asian community are now aware of fair housing laws and are learning how to seek compensation in discrimination cases. Organizers of Asian Americans for Equality are confident that the continuation of the program will reduce housing discrimination against the Asian community significantly. ♦



Best Practices 2000

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